



*Clockwise from top left: Pamela Fowler accepts the Meritorious Achievement Award for her support for low-income students and need-based aid; 2008-09 National Chair David Gruen (center) receives the Distinguished Service Award from 2009-10 National Chair Barry Simmons and Interim President Joan Crissman; Debra Wiley receives the Meritorious Achievement Award for her work as the first Federal Student Aid Ombudsman.*

# ANNOUNCING NASFAA'S 2009 AWARD RECIPIENTS

NASFAA announced the winners of 2009 awards during the National Conference in San Antonio, TX. Numerous financial aid administrators and others in the financial aid field were awarded for their accomplishments and service to students and the profession. NASFAA salutes each of the award recipients for his or her contributions and accomplishments.



*Susan Dynarski accepts the Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award in recognition for her student aid research*

### Lifetime Membership

NASFAA's Lifetime Membership was presented to **Eleanor Morris**, who has distinguished herself through more than three decades of spirited and untiring service at the University of North Carolina and to the cause of equity for all students. She was instrumental in the history of the College Scholarship Service Assembly, serving as an institutional delegate, the first female chair of CSS Council and as a Trustee of the College Board. She was recognized as one of the CSS's 50 "Hall of Famers."

She has served unselfishly as a leader in numerous capacities in the North Carolina, Southern and national associations. Her career stands as a model for all members of the financial aid profession. During her years of service she has exhibited the highest level of commitment to the profession, and unflagging dedication to increasing access and opportunity for all students.

### Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award is presented for outstanding achievements in furthering NASFAA goals, and for significant contributions over a sustained period of time.

NASFAA honored **David L. Gruen** for his service as the 2008–09 Chair. Through his drive and commitment to supporting the financial aid community, he has provided necessary leadership within his state,

regional, and national professional associations, and presented younger members with a strong role model. When called upon, he has always willingly assumed the mantle of leadership, giving tirelessly and without hesitation of his time, talents, and creative abilities. NASFAA applauds Gruen for his tireless commitment to improving the welfare of students and families, serving as an advocate for their interests, and supporting the precept of need-based financial aid.

### Meritorious Achievement Award

As the first Federal Student Aid Ombudsman, **Debra Wiley** successfully established an office to promote individual problem solving and provide an opportunity for customer feedback with student loan agencies. Her goal has always been to work with all parties to resolve the immediate issues and to analyze each case for the potential for change that might prevent recurrence of the same problem. She has worked tirelessly for borrowers who have encountered problems that have persisted for decades, and she has been especially helpful to veterans and the disabled who have had special and extraordinary difficulties. Her energy, focus, and commitment to resolution since the program's inception ten years ago have made the Federal Student Aid Ombudsman essential to loan borrowers nationwide, and earned her NASFAA's Meritorious Achievement Award for 2009.

NASFAA recognized **Pamela Fowler** for her dedication to low-income students and her avid support for need-based financial aid. She has given unselfishly of her time to serve on NASFAA's Board of Directors, the National Conversation Initiative's Public Policy In-Field Professionals Group, and many other committees. Her expertise was instrumental in the creation of NASFAA's Standards of Excellence Review Program (SOE) and she continues to serve as an SOE Peer Reviewer. She is a well-respected leader and teacher among her peers in the student aid community.

### Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award

The Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award is made each year for outstanding contributions to the literature on student financial aid. **Dr. Susan Dynarski** earned this award for her work in student aid research. She is perhaps best known in the financial aid community for her proposal: *"Pell Grants on a Postcard: A Proposal for Simple and Predictable Federal Student Aid."* She argues that there is a cost of compliance and in the "Worst case: compliance costs drive out target population - students don't apply for aid or go to college."

Her primary focus in teaching and research is the economics of education and tax policy. She is a Faculty Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research and has been a Visiting Fellow at Princeton University and the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

Dr. Dynarski has studied the impact of grants and loans on college attendance; the impact of state policy on college completion

rates; and the distributional aspects of college savings incentives. Her current research focuses on the effect of academic preparation on college success, gender gaps in education outcomes, and simplification of the federal student aid system. She has testified on her research to the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, The House Ways and Means Committee and the President's Commission on Tax Reform. She has a special interest in the interaction of inequality and education.

Dr. Dynarski holds degrees from Harvard University (A.B. in Social Studies and Master's in Public Policy) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Ph.D. in economics).

### NASFAA State and Regional Leadership Awards

The NASFAA State and Regional Leadership Awards are presented to one individual in each region who exhibits high integrity and character, who has shown creative leadership and has inspired and encouraged others to actively participate in professional development, who has made outstanding contributions at the regional and state levels over a sustained period of time, and who supports the goals and objectives of NASFAA. While announced at the NASFAA Conference, these awards are presented at the respective regional association conferences throughout the year. The following regional leaders were announced at the 2009 Conference:

- **EASFAA: Michael McGraw**, Director of Financial Aid at Tompkins Cortland Community College, has served his institution and our profession with character and integrity for over 33 years
- **MASFAA: John Parker**, director of community services and educational research at Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corp. John honors MASFAA with his commitment to the aid profession and for his roles as leader for his state, the region and the national association.
- **RMASFAA: Myron "Mick" Hanson**, Director of Financial Aid at The University of Montana, where he has a long and dedicated history of state, regional and national involvement with both the organizations and the people behind them.
- **SASFAA: Janet Sain**, Assistant Vice President and Account Executive at SunTrust Education Loans. She has represented the profession with the highest of integrity throughout her distinguished career.
- **SWASFAA: Linda Gonzalez-Hensgen**, Director of Financial Aid at El Paso Community College. Linda has been very active within the financial aid community for over 20 years on the state, regional and national levels. She has a total commitment to higher education.
- **WASFAA: Steve Herndon**, Director of Student Administrative Support Systems at California State University, Bakersfield. Steve has been an active volunteer and supporter of the financial aid profession and financial aid programs on all levels since the early 1980's.



The Virginia association is honored for its Webinar series "Self-Assessment for Optimum Compliance"



NASFAA is recognized for its "Financial Literacy Week" project



Florida's association earns kudos for its "FASFAA Foster Youth College Access" brochure

## NASFAA State Association Awards

Each year to state associations submit projects to be evaluated by NASFAA's Awards Committee. These awards recognize individual state associations of student financial aid administrators for outstanding projects that contribute to the financial aid profession in the service categories identified below. The association offering the winning project in each of the categories receives a banner to reside with the state association and a \$500 prize check. The award winning projects are summarized below.

### Service to the Financial Aid Profession:

The Virginia association created the first-ever, year-long Webinar series entitled *Self-Assessment for Optimum Compliance*. The theme focused on issues related to audit and compliance, which affect every institution of higher education. The committee's goal was to provide training that would benefit the Virginia association members without extra cost to participate. There was no travel costs involved, so schools with limited budgets could participate. The training webinars were very successful. The number of Virginia association members attending web training continues to grow as more webinars are offered.

### Service to Students and Parents:

The *Financial Literacy Week* project represents the collaborative efforts of

NeASFAA and the National Student Loan Program (NSLP) to organize two different week-long, statewide, multi-campus events to accomplish the following goals: enhance the money management skills of college students; raise public awareness of the importance of sound financial education for young adults; and attract attention for those who influence policy decisions in Nebraska.

NSLP provided accredited financial counselors to teach financial education seminars for college students on NeASFAA member campuses that chose to participate. Each campus selected a one-hour seminar on topics such as budgeting, identity theft, credit reports, contracts, and frugal living.

During the two, week-long events, seminars were presented on 20 campuses and 576 students learned valuable money management skills. Members of Nebraska's congressional delegation were invited to attend both week-long events. All three Congressmen either made appearances or sent representatives to campuses located in their districts. Approximately 73% of the participants completed evaluations, indicating the information was extremely valuable and they would recommend the seminars to their friends.

### Service to Advance Access and Diversity:

The Florida association's Early Awareness Outreach Committee created the *EASFAA Foster Youth College Access Brochure*. The purpose was to get this brochure into the hands of Florida's foster youth and partners so they can see their



Bonnie Joerschke and Brent Tener accept the Committee of the Year award on behalf of the Federal Issues Committee

pathway to college. The brochure effectively communicates the basics of college access, with particular emphasis on financial aid, with the changes in the 2009-10 independent student definition affecting foster youth. FASFAA collaborated with foster youth partners in Florida, including, but not limited to, the Department of Children and Families, Intervention Service agencies, Florida Department of Education Outreach Services and Children's Legal Services.

The brochure was distributed electronically to partners, was posted on several websites and also linked to foster youth newsletters. A paper copy of the brochure was also developed, making it colorful, eye-catching and straightforward, which appealed to foster youth. The reaction to the brochure has been extremely positive.

## Committee of the Year

The NASFAA Committees of the Year for 2008-09, selected by National Chair David Gruen, are the **Finance Committee** and the **Federal Issues Committee**. The Finance Committee was awarded for its extraordinary work to adjust to the economic downturn to ensure NASFAA's financial stability. The Federal Issues Committee had its hands full with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) and many other actions by Congress. They did a great job keeping up with Congress, Gruen said.

By Haley Chitty  
NASFAA Director of Communications



The Federal Issues Committee earns one of two Committee of the Year awards given for 2008-09